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BETHLEHEM



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By

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DRAWINGS BY

CHARLES W. POST

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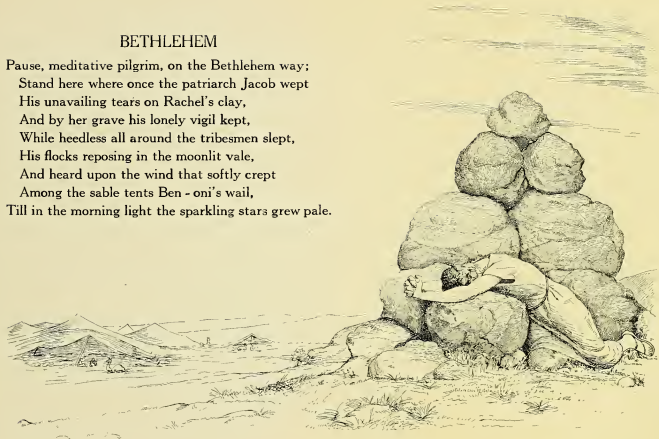
BETHLEHEM



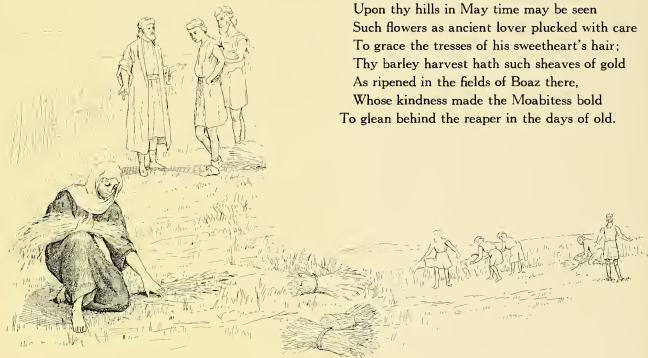
"Stand here where once the patriarch Jacob wept."

BETHLEHEM

Pause, meditative pilgrim, on the Bethlehem way;
Stand here where once the patriarch Jacob wept
His unavailing tears on Rachel's clay,
And by her grave his lonely vigil kept,
While heedless all around the tribesmen slept,
His flocks reposing in the moonlit vale,
And heard upon the wind that softly crept
Among the sable tents Ben-oni's wail,
Till in the morning light the sparkling stars grew pale.



O Bethlehem, thy fields have yet their vernal green,
Thy autumn vineyards still are very fair;
Upon thy hills in May time may be seen
Such flowers as ancient lover plucked with care
To grace the tresses of his sweetheart's hair;
Thy barley harvest hath such sheaves of gold
As ripened in the fields of Boaz there,
Whose kindness made the Moabitess bold
To glean behind the reaper in the days of old.



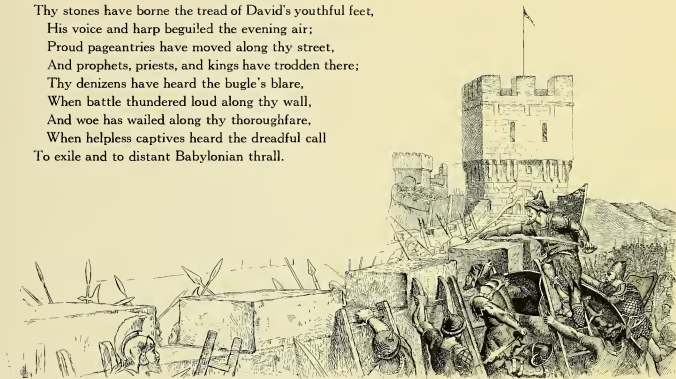


The Shepherd's Field and Field of Boaz.



"Thy stones have borne the tread of David's youthful feet."

Thy stones have borne the tread of David's youthful feet,
His voice and harp beguiled the evening air;
Proud pageantries have moved along thy street,
And prophets, priests, and kings have trodden there;
Thy denizens have heard the bugle's blare,
When battle thundered loud along thy wall,
And woe has wailed along thy thoroughfare,
When helpless captives heard the dreadful call
To exile and to distant Babylonian thrall.



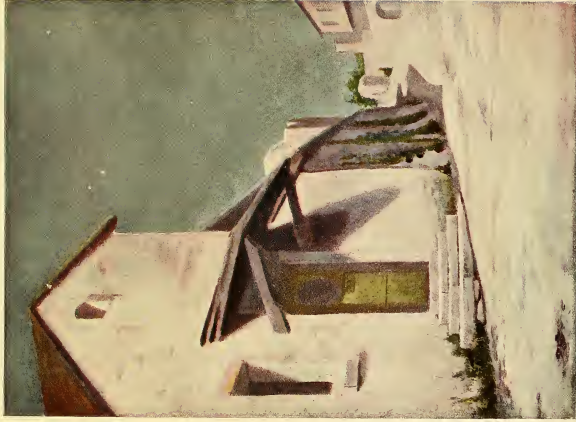
As slowly faded from Judean hills the light,
And shadows denser grew round Bethlehem,
And in the silent heavens the Syrian night
Revealed her shining treasures gem by gem,
While putting on her starry diadem,
The gentle Joseph brought his youthful bride,
The sweetest daughter of the race of Shem,
Along this way with weary, patient stride,
Urging the humble beast that bore her at his side.





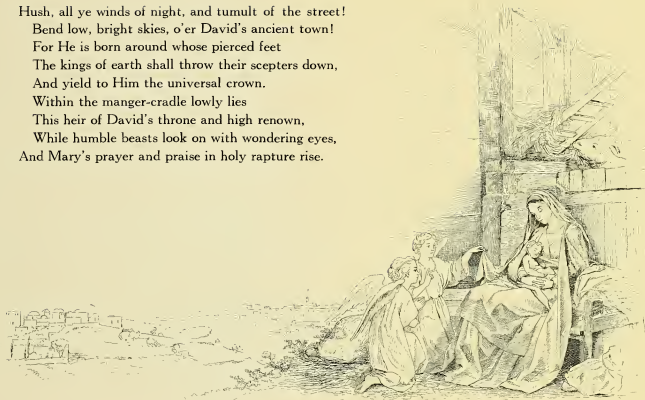
MATER DOLOROSA.

The sweetest daughter of the Race of Shem.

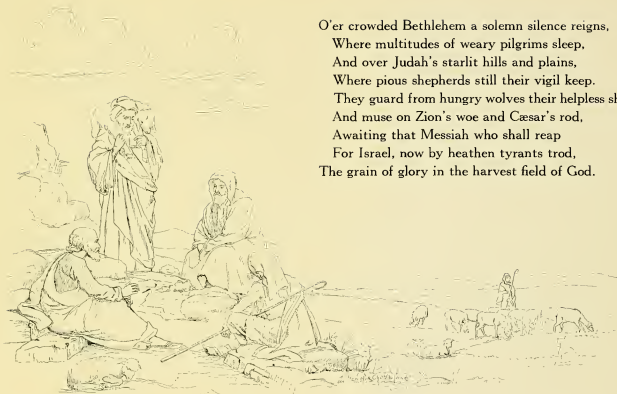


"Hush, all ye winds of night, and tumult of the street!"

Hush, all ye winds of night, and tumult of the street!
Bend low, bright skies, o'er David's ancient town!
For He is born around whose pierced feet
The kings of earth shall throw their scepters down,
And yield to Him the universal crown.
Within the manger-cradle lowly lies
This heir of David's throne and high renown,
While humble beasts look on with wondering eyes,
And Mary's prayer and praise in holy rapture rise.



O'er crowded Bethlehem a solemn silence reigns,
Where multitudes of weary pilgrims sleep,
And over Judah's starlit hills and plains,
Where pious shepherds still their vigil keep.
They guard from hungry wolves their helpless sheep,
And muse on Zion's woe and Cæsar's rod,
Awaiting that Messiah who shall reap
For Israel, now by heathen tyrants trod,
The grain of glory in the harvest field of God.



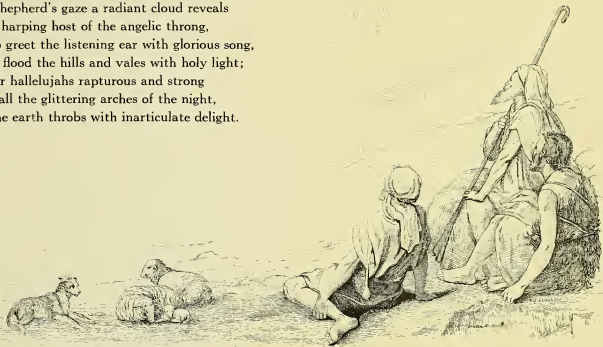


"O'er crowded Bethlehem a solemn silence reigns,
Where multitudes of weary pilgrims sleep."



"The harping host of the angelic throng."

Through midnight skies a faint and far-off music steals,
Then sweeps with fuller notes the earth along;
To shepherd's gaze a radiant cloud reveals
The harping host of the angelic throng,
Who greet the listening ear with glorious song,
And flood the hills and vales with holy light;
Their hallelujahs rapturous and strong
Fill all the glittering arches of the night,
And the earth throbs with inarticulate delight.





"Be not afraid," the herald said, "Behold, I bring
Good tidings of great joy to you and all;
For unto you, in David's town, that King,
On whom the poor and meek of earth shall call,
Is lowly born and lying in the stall."
"Glory to God!" broke from the radiant choir,
"And on earth peace!" Sweetly the measures fall,
While every angel smites his golden lyre,
And the exultant seraphs wave their wings of fire.



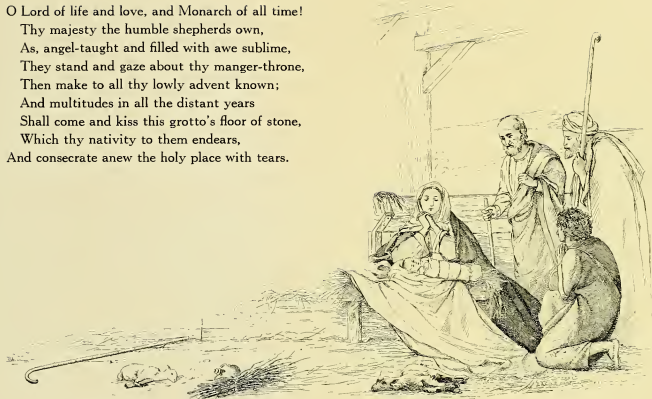


"I bring you good tidings of great joy."

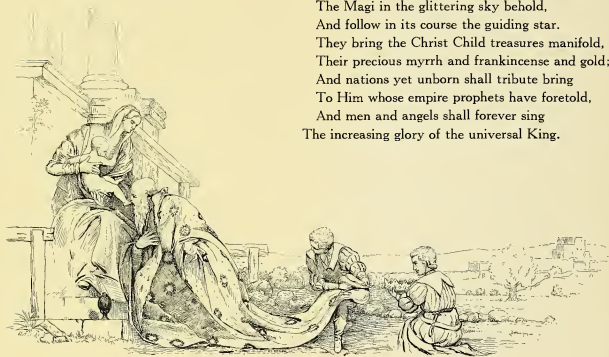


"They stand and gaze about Thy manger-throne."

O Lord of life and love, and Monarch of all time!
Thy majesty the humble shepherds own,
As, angel-taught and filled with awe sublime,
They stand and gaze about thy manger-throne,
Then make to all thy lowly advent known;
And multitudes in all the distant years
Shall come and kiss this grotto's floor of stone,
Which thy nativity to them endears,
And consecrate anew the holy place with tears.



From Babylonian plains and Persian hills afar,
The Magi in the glittering sky behold,
And follow in its course the guiding star.
They bring the Christ Child treasures manifold,
Their precious myrrh and frankincense and gold;
And nations yet unborn shall tribute bring
To Him whose empire prophets have foretold,
And men and angels shall forever sing
The increasing glory of the universal King.





"Guided by the star."



"And grateful pilgrims came from every land."

O Bethlehem, to thee the hearts of men shall turn,
And grateful pilgrims come from every land,
While the unfading stars above thee burn,
And thy familiar hills about thee stand;
For He who holds within His pierced hand
The heavenly scepter whose benignant sway
Shall be by climes and centuries unspanned,
Within thy walls first saw the light of day,
A stable's welcome found, and in the manger lay.



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